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# Farm Broadcasters Letter

United States Department of Agriculture Office of Information Radio-Television Division Washington D.C. 20250 (202) 447-4330



## FARM BROADCASTERS LETTER

Letter No. 2428

September 15, 1989

AGRICULTURE'S NEW LOOK -- American agriculture's youth has taken on a new look in recent years -- extending its focus from the farm to the agribusiness community. And, that new look is represented by 50 of the nation's brightest ag students who will visit Washington, D.C., Sept. 29 ~ Oct. 4. These students, who represent each state, are winners in the FFA Organization's Building Our American Communities -- BOAC -- program. FFA members volunteered an estimated \$9.5 million in labor to BOAC project each year. Contact: Deidre Dyer (919) 741-7644.

ALTERNATIVE AGRICULTURE -- Assistant Secretary of Agriculture Charles Hess says the significance of a recent report by the National Research Council which endorsed alternative farming techniques that use fewer chemicals and show greater sensitivity to the environment is potentially "unparalleled." The report said commodity support programs often discourage environmentally sound agriculture. "Agriculture needs to be highly efficient and internationally competitive to be economically viable," Hess said. "On the other hand, it needs a system of production which is environmentally sensitive, sustainable and whose products are viewed as safe." Hess says he believes both goals are achievable. Contact: Charles Hess (202) 447-5923.

LYME DISEASE CONFERENCE SET -- The University of Wisconsin is sponsoring a conference on Lyme disease Oct. 4 and 5 in Madison. The two-day meeting should provide more information about this disease, which is spread by deer ticks. Speakers will be educators, researchers, physicians and communicators familiar with the tick and the disease. Contact: C. F. Koval (608) 262-4608.

OAT BRAN SALES increased a whopping 215 percent last year. What's the secret? "There's nothing magical about oat bran," says Nutritionist Ruth Patrick of the Louisiana Cooperative Extension Service. "It's the water-soluble dietary fiber in oat bran and oatmeal that lowers blood cholesterol levels when used as part of a low-fat low-cholesterol diet. Several other foods can do as well." Contact: Ruth Patrick (504) 388-4141.

HORTICULTURE INDUSTRY BLOSSOMS -- The U.S. horticulture industry is past the budding stage. It has flowered into an average annual growth of 10 percent per year since 1982 -- one of the fastest growing sectors in agriculture, according to a recent issue of USDA's Farmlife magazine. Preliminary figures for 1988 show horticulture, totaling \$6.9 billion in cash receipts, earned 9.5 percent of the total for all U.S. farm crops. Contact: Doyle Johnson (202) 786-1884.

SLEEPING SEEDS -- USDA Chemist Sharon Sowa wants millions of seeds to take a nap. Her job is to find new ways to preserve seeds -- from wheat and other food staples to passion fruit and guayule that's a natural source of rubber. Once asleep, the seeds can be revived quickly just by exposing them to air. Contact: Sharon Sowa (303) 484-0402.

WHEN THE SPIRITS WASH DOWNSTREAM -- In an effort to prevent a 2,000-year-old Abenaki Indian burial ground from eroding into the Mississquoi River in Highgate, Vt., USDA's Soil Conservation Service is helping stabilize the river bank. To determine the boundaries of the ancient graveyard, a high-tech method was used -- ground penetrating radar. Contact: Ann Dudas (802) 951-6795.

MANAGING TIME BETTER -- With the frenzy of back-to-school activities, time becomes a precious commodity for most parents. But, University of Georgia Home Economist Esther Maddux says it's possible to get the things done that are important to you -- if you develop good time management habits. "Developing good time management habits takes some self-analysis, some planning, some evaluating and lots of self control," she says. Contact: Rosann Kent (404) 542-8958.

WORLD FOOD DAY OCT. 16 -- World Food Day will be Monday, Oct. 16 this year. Every year, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations chooses a theme to encourage a common focus -- this year's is "Food and the Environment." Secretary of Agriculture Clayton Yeutter plans to speak at the United Nations' World Food Day ceremonies Oct. 17.

SUN RAYS HURT PLANTS, TOO -- The same sun rays that have been linked to skin cancer and tanning also wreak havoc with a vital protein in plant growth and production, says USDA Scientist Autar K. Mattoo. A type of ultraviolet radiation called UV-B breaks down the plant protein, which is essential for photosynthesis, so quickly that after only 30 minutes, half of the protein has been degraded. Contact: Autar K. Mattoo (301) 344-2103.

AQUACULTURE is still struggling to change its image from a hobby to the commercial agricultural venture it can become, says Gary Burtle, a University of Georgia researcher. The industry is returning more than \$500 million in sales to U.S. farmers each year, Burtle says. The Coastal Plain Experiment Station, Tifton, Ga., has re-entered the aquaculture research area to help develop new aquaculture technology. Contact: Fred Neilson (404) 542-8929.

FROM OUR RADIO SERVICE

AGRICULTURE USA #1684 -- Farmers are under strict rules not to damage highly erodible land or hurt irreplaceable wetlands. Maria Bynum reports on what are called "sodbuster/swampbuster" provisions.  
(Weekly reel -- 13-1/2 min. documentary.)

CONSUMER TIME #1166 -- A pesticide guide for concerned consumers; consumer concerns at farmers' markets; a home remedy against gypsy moths; turning low value foods into high value products; grocers enter into pesticide controversy.  
(Weekly reel of 2-1/2 - 3 min. consumer features.)

AGRITAPE #1673 -- USDA news highlights; a new guide to pesticides; fishmeal for cattle?; corn/sorghum program details; USDA announces changes in wheat program.  
(Weekly reel of news features.)

NEWS FEATURE FIVE #1237 -- Swine disease probed; new dwarf lisianthus; impatient--marketing success; seafood for cows; century of sorghum. (Weekly reel of research feature stories.)

UPCOMING ON USDA RADIO NEWSLINE -- Wed., Sept. 20, catfish production, agricultural outlook; Thurs., Sept. 21, agricultural resources outlook; Fri., Sept. 22, livestock and poultry production; Mon., Sept. 25, world ag. outlook; Tues., Sept. 26, crop/weather update, poultry production; Wed., Sept. 27, potato production, aquaculture outlook; Thurs., Sept. 28, grain stocks, world tobacco situation; Fri., Sept. 29, ag. prices, hogs/pigs numbers, trout production.

DIAL THE USDA RADIO NEWSLINE (202) 488-8358 or 8359.  
Material changed at 5 p.m. EDT each working day.

FROM OUR TELEVISION NEWS SERVICE

USDA TV NEWS SERVICE -- (Sept. 14, 16 & 18) Clayton Yeutter, Agriculture Secretary, comments on the September crop production report; William Penn, ASCS Program Analyst, on the modified wheat program; James Donald, USDA Outlook Board Chairman, on U.S. crop supplies; Jim Miller, USDA Economist, on fat content in dairy products; Scott Sanford, USDA Economist, on cotton & wool.

FEATURES: Will Pemble reports on research to improve the flavor of warmed-over meat; DeBoria Janifer on California's medfly quarantine.

NEXT WEEK: Pat O'Leary reports on the popularity of peanut butter; Lynn Wyvill reports on infant nutrition and growth.

Available on satellite Westar IV, audio 6.2 or 6.8:

THURSDAY . . . . . 7:30-7:45 p.m., EDT, Transponder 12D  
SATURDAY . . . . . 10:30-11:15 a.m., EDT, Transponder 10D  
MONDAY . . . . . 8:30-9:15 a.m., EDT, Transponder 12D  
(Repeat of Saturday transmission)

OFF MIKE

MEDITERRANEAN ... fruit fly outbreak near Mountain View, Calif., is one of the major stories being covered by Walt Shaw (KRAK, Sacramento). Walt says the issue is also boosting T-shirt sales featuring the fly. Rice harvest has been completed; yields about the same as last year. Walt says most agriculture production in his region is irrigated and that rainfall in the area has been sufficient. But, coastal and southern sections continue to suffer drought conditions.

LOOKS ... like seed corn producers may set records this year, says Jim Riggs (WIL0/WSHW, Frankfort, Ind.). Harvest is underway and yields look good; including commercial corn. Soybeans are questionable, dampness has affected the pods. Says rain has fallen with such force it has hammered the ground. Moisture levels could interfere with fall tillage. Jim says several hog producers are expanding operations but they term it "getting more efficient."

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COTTON ... needs hot, dry weather in September but Lenny Ray (KVOP/KATX, Plainview, Texas) says his area continues to receive rain. Corn harvest is underway and yields are lower than forecast. Many producers were forced to replant due to hail damage earlier this year, and cotton didn't get in until mid-June. Lenny says several producers have been affected by provisions in the disaster assistance program. Farmers who replanted to other crops, such as sunflowers, will receive less assistance than those who did not replant.

SUPER ... crop conditions, says Don Wick (KWOA, Worthington, Minn.). Producers were worried when they were planting, because there was no subsoil moisture, but Don says rains arrived exactly when needed and subsoil levels are being replenished.

FARM ... department at WIBC, Indianapolis, Ind., has been closed. Farm director Al Pell is looking. Call him at (317) 283-7570.



VIC POWELL, Chief  
Radio & Television Division